Alchemy

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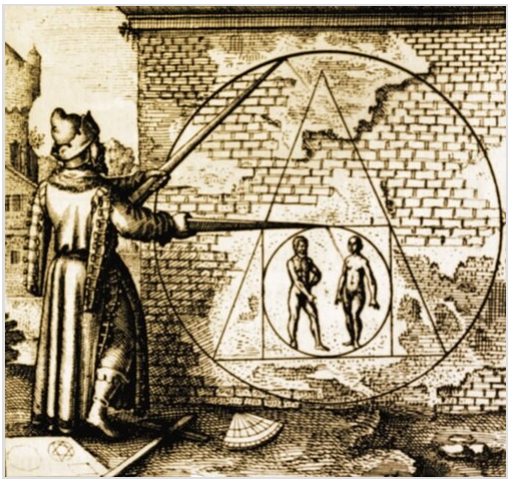
Alchemy refers to a range of philosophies and ancient practices which seek to prepare or develop the "elixir of Life" or "immortality" or "longevity" using the philosophers' stone, accomplish the transmutation of base substances into gold, and attain ultimate wisdom. Many alchemical sources treat the various substances, equipment and processes used in alchemical workshops in an allegorical sense, as metaphors for a spiritual discipline. Alchemy, in its physical procedures and investigations can be viewed as a protoscience, the precursor to modern chemistry, having provided many procedures, equipment and names of substances which are still in use.



The matter lies before the eyes of all; everybody sees it, touches it, loves it, but knows it not. ~ *The Golden Tract*

Quotes

- The Hindus do not pay particular attention to alchemy, but no nation is entirely free from it, and one nation has more bias for it than another, which must not be construed as proving intelligence or ignorance; for we find that many intelligent people are entirely given to alchemy, whilst ignorant people ridicule the art and its adepts.
  - Alberuni, quoted from Lal, K. S. (1992). The legacy of Muslim rule in India. New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan. Chapter 1
- **Alphonse**: Humankind cannot gain anything without first giving something in return. To obtain, something of equal value must be lost. That is alchemy's first law of Equivalent Exchange. In those days, we really believed that to be the world's one, and only truth.
  - Hiromu Arakawa, *Fullmetal Alchemist*, (2003)

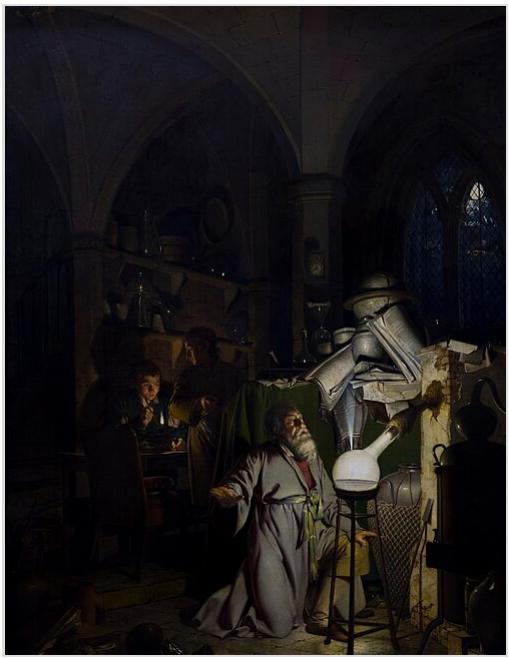
Did you know they can change it all? They got alchemy. ~ Kate Bush

- Above all, every relation must be considered as suspicious, which depends in any degree upon

religion, as the prodigies of Livy: And no less so, everything that is to be found in the writers of natural magic or alchemy, or such authors, who seem, all of them, to have an unconquerable appetite for falsehood and fable.

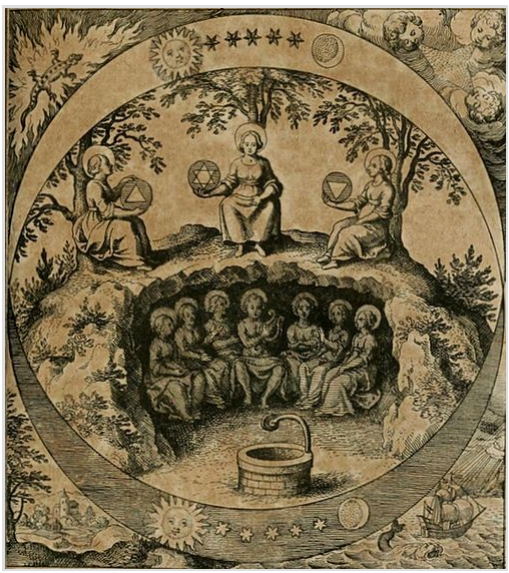
  - Francis Bacon, Novum Organum, Book II, Aphorism 29 (1620)

- Credulity in arts and opinions... is likewise of two kinds viz., when men give too much belief to arts themselves, or to certain authors in any art. The sciences that sway the imagination more than the reason are principally three viz., astrology, natural magic, and alchemy... Alchemy may be compared to the man who told his sons that he had left them gold, buried somewhere in his vineyard; while they by digging found no gold, but by turning up the mould about the roots of the vines procured a plentiful vintage. So the search and endeavours to make gold have brought many useful inventions to light.
  - Francis Bacon, *De Augmentis Scientiarum* (1623) as quoted by Edward Thorpe, *History of Chemistry*, Vol. 1, p. 43.



The alchemical tradition assumes that every physical art or science is a body of knowledge which exists only because it is ensouled by invisible powers and processes. ~ Manly Palmer Hall

- ... throughout his long life Newton continued to experiment in alchemy; indeed, he was, as Gleick writes, "the peerless alchemist of Europe". These studies in the dark art were conducted in deepest secrecy, and did not come to light until centuries after his death, when a large portion of his papers were reassembled. The economist John Maynard Keynes, the saviour of much of this documentation, was astonished by what he read. "Newton," Keynes told his students at Trinity, "was not the first of the age of reason. He was the last of the magicians."
  - John Banville, (29 August 2003) "Review of *Isaac Newton* by James Gleick (https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/aug/30/scienceandnature.highereducation)". *The Guardian*.



I had discovered, early in my researches, that their doctrine was no mere chemical fantasy, but a philosophy they applied to the world, to the elements, and to man himself. ~ William Butler Yeats

- Chemistry is not a primitive science, like geometry or astronomy; it is constructed from the debris of a previous scientific formation; a formation half chimerical and half positive, itself founded on the treasure slowly amassed by the practical discoveries of metallurgy, medicine, industry, and domestic economy. It has to do with alchemy, which pretended to enrich its adepts by teaching them to manufacture gold and silver, to shield them from diseases by the preparation of the panacea, and finally to obtain for them perfect felicity by identifying them with the soul of the world and the universal spirit.

  - Marcellin Berthelot *Les Origines de l'Alkimie* (1885) as quoted by M. M. Pattison Muir, *A History of Chemical Theories and Laws* (1907) Ch.1, p. 2.

- The great libraries of Paris, Rome, Venice, Milan, Escurial, Cracow, Gotha, Munich, and Cologne preserve a large number of Greek alchemical manuscripts of unknown authorship and uncertain date. Hoefer... refers them to the third and fourth centuries, but other authorities with greater probability place them not earlier than the tenth and eleventh.
  The most celebrated of these essays are attributed to Zosimus, of whose history nothing is certainly known, and bear these titles: "On Furnaces and Chemical Instruments," "On the Virtue and Composition of Waters," "On the Holy Water," "On the Sacred Art of Making Gold and Silver." In a treatise attributed to Synesius, we find a description of a hydroscopium or hydrometer which was re-discovered as long after as the sixteenth century.
  In these manuscripts chemistry is called the "sacred Art," and the exceedingly obscure and figurative language in which they are written makes it well nigh impossible to separate fact from fancy; Hoefer has indeed attempted to discover modern chemical conceptions in the allusions to Egyptian myths and the chaotic collections of spagyric arcana. ...**[E]ach author seems to have aimed to write treatises intelligible only to himself, and we greatly doubt his success in even this respect.**
  - Henry Carrington Bolton, "An Address Delivered before the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at Montreal," (August 23, 1882) *The Chemical News and Journal of Physical Science*, p. 115, (https://books.google.com/books?id=3R5LAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA115) Vol. 46, No. 1190 (Sept. 15, 1882).

- What a lovely afternoon
  On a cloudbusting kind of day.
  We took our own 'Mystery Tour'
  And got completely lost somewhere up in the hills.

  And we came up on a bee-keeper,
  And he said "**Did you know they can change it all?**"
  They got alchemy.
  They turn the roses into gold
  They turn the lilac into honey
  They're making love for the peaches.

  And they'll do it,
  Do it for you.
  - Kate Bush, in "You Want Alchemy" (B-side of "The Red Shoes" single) (4 April 1994)

- The science that made the pyramids possible was chemistry, or, more precisely... alchemy. ... [T]he legendary Philosopher's Stone represents the last misinterpreted vestiges of the alchemical science that flourished during the Pyramid Age ...Technically alchemy encompasses historical chemical developments. ...There were great alchemical achievements during antiquity.
  - Joseph Davidovits, *The Pyramids: an Enigma Solved* (1988) p. 66.

- That the forms of natural bodies may depend upon different arrangements of the same

particles of matter has been a favourite hypothesis advanced in the earliest era of physical research, and often supported by the reasonings of the ablest philosophers. **This sublime chemical speculation sanctioned by the authority of Hooke, Newton, and Boscovich, must not be confounded with the ideas advanced by the alchemists concerning the convertibility of the elements into each other.** The possible transmutation of metals has generally been reasoned upon not as a philosophical research, but as an empirical process. **Those who have asserted the actual production of the precious metals from other elements, or their decomposition, or who have defended the chimera of the philosopher's stone, have been either impostors, or men deluded by impostors. In this age of rational inquiry it will be useless to decry the practices of the adepts, or to caution the public against confounding the hypothetical views respecting the elements founded upon distinct analogies, with the dreams of alchemical visionaries, most of whom, as an author of the last century justly observed, professed an art without principles, the beginning of which was deceit, the progress delusion, and the end poverty.**

  - Humphry Davy, *The Collected Works of Sir Humphry Davy* (1840) Vol. 4, pp. 364-365 (https://archive.org/details/collectedworkss02davygoog/page/n394/mode/1up?view=theater), ed., John Davy.

- **The matter lies before the eyes of all; everybody sees it, touches it, loves it, but knows it not.** It is glorious and vile, precious and of small account, and is found everywhere... But, to be brief, our Matter has as many names as there are things in this world; that is why the foolish know it not.

  - *The Golden Tract concerning the Philosopher's Stone* in the *Musaeum Hermeticum*

- Why should I use many words unto you? For this thing is extracted from thee, and thou art its ore; in thee they find it, and, to speak more plainly, from thee they take it; and when thou hast experienced this, the love and delight of it will be increased in thee. And thou shalt know that this thing subsists truly and beyond all doubt. … I have not known any Stone which might be likened to this Stone, or which may have the effect of it. For in this Stone the Four Elements are contained, and it is likened to the world and the composition of the world.

  - "The Interrogations of King Calid, and the Answers of Morienus" in *De Transmutatione Metallica*

- The first authentic record on this subject (alchemy) is an edict of Diocletian, about 300 years after Christ, ordering a diligent search to be made in Egypt for all the ancient books which treated of the art of making gold and silver, that they might be consigned to the flames. This edict necessarily presumes a certain antiquity to the pursuit; and fabulous history has recorded Solomon, Pythagoras, and Hermes among its distinguished votaries.

  - William Godwin, quoted by**H.P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology*, Vol. I, (1877) (p. 504)

- **The alchemical tradition assumes that every physical art or science is a body of knowledge which exists only because it is ensouled by invisible powers and processes.** Physical chemistry, as it is practiced in the modern world, is concerned principally with pharmaceutical or industrial research projects. It is confined within the boundaries of an all-pervading materialism, which binds labor to the advancement of physical objectives.

  - Manly Palmer Hall, in *Meditation Symbols in Eastern and Western Mysticism*

- **It is a mistake to confound Alchemy with Chemistry.** Modern Chemistry is a science which deals merely with the external forms in which the element of matter is manifesting itself. It never produces anything new. We may mix and compound and decompose two or more chemical bodies an unlimited number of times, and cause them to appear under various different forms, but at the end we will have no augmentation of substance, nor anything more than the combinations of the substances that have been employed at the beginning. Alchemy does not mix or compound anything, it causes that which already exists in a latent state to become active and grow. Alchemy is, therefore, more comparable to botany or agriculture than to Chemistry; and, in fact, the growth of a plant, a tree, or an animal is an alchemical process going on in the alchemical laboratory of nature, and performed by the great Alchemist, the power of God acting in nature.
  - Franz Hartmann, in *In the Pronaos of the Temple of Wisdom, containing the History of the True and the False Rosicrucians* (1890), p. 129

- *Subtle.*
  No egg but differs from a chicken more
  Than metals in themselves.
  Surly.
  That cannot be.
  The egg's ordained by nature to that end
  And is a chicken in *potentia*.
  Subtle.
  The same we say of lead and other metals,
  Which would be gold if they had time.
  ...for 'twere absurd
  To think that nature in the earth bred gold
  Perfect in the instant; something went before.
  There must be remote matter.
  - Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist* (1610)

- **The alchemical operation consisted essentially in separating the prima materia, the so-called chaos, into the active principle, the soul, and the passive principle, the body, which were then reunited in personified form in the coniunctio or 'chymical marriage'... the ritual cohabitation of Sol and Luna.**
  - Carl Jung, in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*

- **These are not fables. You will touch with your hands, you will see with your own eyes, the Azoth, the Mercury of Philosophers, which alone will suffice to obtain for you our Stone.** … Darkness will appear on the face of the Abyss; Night, Saturn and the Antimony of the Sages will appear; blackness, and the raven's head of the alchemists, and all the colors of the world, will appear at the hour of conjunction; the rainbow also, and the peacock's tail. Finally, after the matter has passed from ashen-colored to white and yellow, you will see the Philosopher's Stone, our King and Dominator Supreme, issue forth from his glassy sepulcher to mount his bed or his throne in his glorified body... diaphanous as crystal; compact and most weighty, as easily fusible by fire as resin, as flowing as wax and more so than quicksilver … the color of saffron when powdered, but red as rubies when in an integral mass...
  - Heinrich Khunrath, in *Amphitheatrum*

- Everyone knows Newton as the great scientist. Few remember that he spent half his life

muddling with alchemy, looking for the philosopher's stone. That was the pebble by the seashore he really wanted to find.

  - Fritz Leiber, in "Poor Superman" (1951), also in the anthology *Tomorrow* (1952) edited by Robert Heinlein

- If by fire
  Of sooty coal th' empiric alchymist
  Can turn, or holds it possible to turn,
  Metals of drossiest ore to perfect gold.

  - John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667; 1674), Book V, line 439, reported in *Hoyt's New Cyclopedia Of Practical Quotations* (1922), p. 19

- The writer of the following pages submits his opinions upon Alchemy to the public... convinced that the character of the Alchemists, and the object of their study, have been almost universally misconceived; and as a matter of fact though of the past, he thinks it of sufficient importance to take a step in the right direction for developing the true nature of the studies of that extraordinary class of thinkers. The opinion has become almost universal, that Alchemy was a "pretended science by which gold and silver were to be made by the transmutation of the baser metals into these substances, the agent of the transmutation being called the philosopher's stone." Those who professed this Art are supposed to have been either impostors or under a delusion created by impostors and mountebanks. This opinion has found its way into works on Science, and has been stereotyped in biographical dictionaries and in encyclopaedias... allusions to Alchemy, in histories, romances, and novels, are of but one character, and imply that the professors of the Art were either deluders or deluded, were guilty of fraud or the victims of it.... the object of the Art was the perfection, or at least the improvement, of Man. (Preface)

  - *Remarks upon alchemy and the alchemists, indicating a method of discovering the true nature of Hermetic philosophy: and showing that the search after the philosopher's stone had not for its object the discovery of an agent for the transmutation of metals,* (https://archive.org/details/b24927107) Published by James Miller, (1865)

- Some two years since, I printed a small pamphlet on the subject of Alchemy, my object being to throw out an idea with which I was strongly impressed, that the Philosopher's Stone was a mere symbol, and that the Alchemists were not in pursuit of gold, but of wisdom, carefully and conscientiously leaving the latter word undefined... I did not then, nor do I now, undertake to say precisely what the Alchemists sought. I was positive, however, that they were not in pursuit of 'gold or of worldly honors; and I am still of this opinion. I thought their object was religious, in which I am also fully confirmed by a further examination of alchemical works, of which I have obtained many since my pamphlet was printed... My pamphlet, in which I express the opinion that the Philosopher’s Stone is a mere symbol, signifying something which could not be expressed openly without incurring the danger of an auto-da-fe.

  - *Remarks upon alchemy and the alchemists...* Published by James Miller (1865)

- Few would defend a small view of Alchemy as "Mother of Chemistry", and confuse its true goal with those external metal arts. **Alchemy is an erotic science, involved in buried aspects of reality, aimed at purifying and transforming all being and matter.** Not to suggest that material operations are ever abandoned. The adept holds to both the mystical and physical work.

  - Jim Morrison, in *The Lords and the New Creatures: Poems* (1969), The Lords: Notes on

Vision

- **They can picture love affairs of chemicals and stars, a romance of stones, or the fertility of fire. Strange, fertile correspondences the alchemists sensed in unlikely orders of being. Between men and planets, plants and gestures, words and weather.**
  - Jim Morrison, in *The Lords and the New Creatures: Poems* (1969), The Lords: Notes on Vision
- Cinema returns us to anima, religion of matter, which gives each thing its special divinity and sees gods in all things and beings. Cinema, heir of alchemy, last of an erotic science.
  - Jim Morrison, in *The Lords and the New Creatures: Poems* (1969), The Lords: Notes on Vision
- The starving chemist in his golden views
  Supremely blest.
  - Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man*, Epistle II, line 269, reported in *Hoyt's New Cyclopedia Of Practical Quotations* (1922), p. 19
- Alchemists knew the coiled serpent as Uboros. ...it represented the highest goal of their quest: the harmonious union of opposites, especially the masculine and the feminine sides of the personality. The motto that usually accompanied it was "From the One to the One."
  - Theodore Roszak, *The Gendered Atom* (1999)
- You are an alchemist; make gold of that.
  - Timon in William Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens* (date uncertain, published 1623), Act V, scene 1, line 117
- It is necessary to deprive matter of its qualities in order to draw out its soul. ...Copper is like a man; it has a soul and a body; ...the soul is the most subtile part, ...that is to say, the tinctorial spirit. The body is the ponderable, material, terrestrial thing, endowed with a shadow. ...After a series of suitable treatments copper becomes without shadow and better than gold. ...The elements ...grow and are transmuted, because it is their qualities, not their substances, which are contrary.
  - Stephanus of Alexandria (c. 620 A.D.) from a MS. in Greek, in the *Bibliotheque Nationale*, Paris, as quoted by M. M. Pattison Muir, *A History of Chemical Theories and Laws* (1907) p. 5, citing Marcellin Berthelot, *Les Origines de l'Alkimie* (1885) pp. 276-277.
- **I had discovered, early in my researches, that their doctrine was no mere chemical fantasy, but a philosophy they applied to the world, to the elements, and to man himself.**
  - William Butler Yeats, in *Rosa Alchemica*
- *The Turba Philosophorum* is indisputably the most ancient extant treatise on Alchemy in the Latin tongue, but it was not, so far as can be ascertained, originally written in Latin; the compiler or editor, for in many respects it can scarcely be regarded as an original composition, wrote either in Hebrew or Arabic; however, the work, not only at the present day, but seemingly during the six or seven centuries when it was quoted as an authority by all the alchemical adepts, has been familiar only in its Latin garb. (preface)

  - Arthur Edward Waite, in *The Turba Philosophorum*, or *Assembly of the Philosophers*, c. 900 A.D. translated by Waite (https://archive.org/details/A.EWaiteTurbaPhilosophorum/page/n5/mode/2up) (1894)

- For me, I have seen worlds and people begin and end, actually and metaphorically, and it will always be the same. It's always fire and water.
  No matter what your scientific background, emotionally you're an alchemist. You live in a world of liquids, solids, gases and heat-transfer effects that accompany their changes of state. These are the things you perceive, the things you feel. Whatever you know about their true natures is rafted on top of that. So, when it comes to the day-to-day sensations of living, from mixing a cup of coffee to flying a kite, you treat with the four ideal elements of the old philosophers: earth, air, fire, water.
  Let's face it, air isn't very glamorous, no matter how you look at it. I mean, I'd hate to be without it, but it's invisible and so long as it behaves itself it can be taken for granted and pretty much ignored. Earth? The trouble with earth is that it endures. Solid objects tend to persist with a monotonous regularity.
  Not so fire and water, however. They're formless, colorful, and they're always doing something. While suggesting you repent, prophets very seldom predict the wrath of the gods in terms of landslides and hurricanes. No. Floods and fires are what you get for the rottenness of your ways. Primitive man was really on his way when he learned to kindle the one and had enough of the other nearby to put it out. It is coincidence that we've filled hells with fires and oceans with monsters? I don't think so. Both principles are mobile, which is generally a sign of life. Both are mysterious and possess the power to hurt or kill. It is no wonder that intelligent creatures the universe over have reacted to them in a similar fashion. It is the alchemical response.

  - Roger Zelazny, *Isle of the Dead* (1969), Chapter 6

Encyclopædia Brittanica (1875)

A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and General Literature, Ninth Edition, Volume 1, pp. 459-467, (https://books.google.com/books?id=zjVnAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA459) "Alchemy, Chemy, or Hermetics."

- **Modern science dates from three discoveries**—that of Copernicus, the effect of which... was to expel the astrologers from the society of astronomers; that of Torricelli and Pascal, of the weight of the atmosphere... which was the foundation of physics; **lastly... Lavoisier... by discovering oxygen, destroyed the theory of Stahl, the last alchemist who can be excused for not being a chemist.**
  Before these three grand stages in **the progress of science, the reign of astrology, magic, and alchemy was universal and almost uncontested.** Even a genius like Kepler, who by his three great laws laid the foundations for the Copernican system, was guided in his investigations by astrological and cabalistic considerations.

- **It was the alchemists who first stated, however confusedly, the problems which science is still engaged in solving; and to them... we owe the enormous service of removing the endless obstructions which a purely rationalistic method, born before its time and degenerating into verbal quibbles and scholastic jargon, had placed in the path of human progress.**

- **Alchemy was... the sickly but imaginative infancy through which modern chemistry had to pass before it** attained its majority [i.e.,] **became a positive science.** The search for gold

was only one crisis in this infancy. This crisis is over, and **alchemy is now a thing of the past**. There is no longer any need to exhort adventurous spirits, who hope to find Golconda at the bottom of their crucibles, to leave such visions and turn to the safer paths of science or industry. **The battle has been fought and won**...

- **If here and there an honest student of the black art still survives, he is regarded as a mad but harmless enthusiast; and as for the pretended searchers for the philosopher's stone, they are, if possible, less interesting objects than the dupes they still continue to cheat.**
- [T]he full time is come for applying to the occult sciences the same searching analysis to which the other myths of prehistoric times have been so rigorously subjected. To trace its earliest beginnings, to investigate its development by the aid of modern criticism, is the province of physical science, no less than of the sister science of morals. ...[B]oth had a common origin. **Those ancient cosmogenies, those poetical systems**... struck out to solve the problem of the universe and of the destiny of mankind, **were the germs of science no less than of literature... philosophy... religion.**
- **[A]s in the infancy of science its various branches were confused and confounded, so in a like stage of society we often find the same person uniting the parts of philosopher, *savant* and priest.**
- **Curiosity was first excited by fancy** (and the fancy of primitive man... was far more active and vigorous than ours), **and when it found itself baffled by a natural reaction, it had recourse to divination.**
- **In the first stages of civilisation the magician was the man of science.** The mysteries of this magic art being **inseparable from** those of **religion and philosophy,** were **preserved... hermetically sealed in the** adyta of the **temple.** Its philosophy was the cabala. We must consequently look on the various cabalas or oral traditions, transmitted from age to age as the oracles of various faiths and creeds, as constituting the elements of that theory which the Jewish cabala promulgated some centuries later in a condensed and mutilated form.
- Astrology and magic were the efforts made in various ways to verify and apply this theory... **magical power was at starting purely cosmogenic**, *i.e.*, regarded as **an attribute of God or nature, before it was counterfeited** by the magicians of various countries.
- But as St. Simon has well observed, chemical phenomena are much more complicated than astronomical—the latter requiring only observation, the former experiment—and hence astrology preceded alchemy. But there was then no hard and fast line between the several branches of science, and hence the most opposite were united, not, as now, by a common philosophical or philanthropical object, but by reason of their common theological origin. Thus **alchemy was the daughter of astrology, and it was not till the end of the 16th century A.D. that she passed from a state of tutelage.**
- **Just in same way medicine as a magical or sacred art was prior to alchemy**; for... before thinking of forming new substances, men employed already existing herbs, stones, drugs, perfumes, and vapours. The medical art was indissolubly bound up with astrology, but, judging from the natural inventiveness of the ancients, we should have expected... that chemical preparations would have played a more important part among the instruments of priestly thaumaturgy.
- As in the middle ages... [t]here was then no desire to communicate discoveries; science was a

sort of freemasonry, and silence was effectually secured by priestly anathemas; men of science were as jealous of one another as they were of all other classes of society. ...**[T]o form a clear picture of this earliest stage of civilisation, an age which represents at once the *naïveté* of childhood and the suspicious reticence of senility, we must turn our eyes to the priest**, on the one hand, claiming as his own all art and science, and commanding respect by his contemptuous silence; **and, on the other hand, to the mechanic plying the loom, extracting the Tyrian dye, practising chemistry, though ignorant of its very name, and despised and oppressed, and only tolerated when he furnished Religion with her trappings or War with arms. Thus the growth of chemistry was slow**, and by reason of its backwardness **it was longer than any other art in ridding itself of** the leading-strings of **magic and astrology.**

- **Practical discoveries must have been made many times without science acquiring thereby any new fact.** For to prevent a discovery from being lost there must be such a combination favourable circumstances... There must be publicity... the application of the discovery must be... obvious, as satisfying some want. ...Nor is this all; **for a practical discovery to become a scientific fact, it must serve to demonstrate the error of one hypothesis, and to suggest a new one, better fitted** for the synthesis of existing facts. **But old beliefs are proverbially obstinate and virulent in their opposition to newer and truer theories which are destined to eject and replace them. To sum up, even in our own day chemistry rests on a less sound basis** than either physics, which had the advantage of originating as late as the 17th century, or astronomy, which dates from the time when the Chaldean shepherd had sufficiently provided for his daily wants to find leisure for gazing into the starry heavens.

Isis Unveiled (1877)

: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology by H.P. Blavatsky

- Alchemists. — From Al and Chemi, fire, or the god and patriarch, Kham, also, the name of Egypt. The Rosicrucians of the middle ages, such as Robertus de Fluctibus (Robert Fludd), Paracelsus, Thomas Vaughan (Eugenius Philalethes), Van Helmont, and others, were all alchemists, who sought for the hidden spirit in every inorganic matter. Some people — nay, the great majority — have accused alchemists of charlatanry and false pretending. Surely such men as Roger Bacon, Agrippa, Henry Kunrath, and the Arabian Geber (the first to introduce into Europe some of the secrets of chemistry), can hardly be treated as impostors — least of all as fools. Scientists who are reforming the science of physics upon the basis of the atomic theory of Demokritus, as restated by John Dalton, conveniently forget that Demokritus, of Abdera, was an alchemist, and that the mind that was capable of penetrating so far into the secret operations of nature in one direction must have had good reasons to study and become a Hermetic philosopher. Olaus Borrichias says, that the cradle of alchemy is to be sought in the most distant times.
  - Vol. I, Before the Veil, p. xxvi.
- The literary resources of the Vatican and other Catholic repositories of learning... When one has such treasures at hand — original manuscripts, papyri, and books pillaged from the richest heathen libraries; old treatises on magic and alchemy; and records of all the trials for witchcraft, and sentences for the same to rack, stake, and torture, it is mighty easy to write volumes of accusations against the Devil. We affirm on good grounds that there are hundreds of the most valuable works on the occult sciences, which are sentenced to eternal concealment from the

public, but are attentively read and studied by the privileged who have access to the Vatican Library. The laws of nature are the same for heathen sorcerer as for Catholic saint; and a “miracle” may be produced as well by one as by the other, without the slightest intervention of God or devil.

  - Vol. I, p. 17.

- In the latter part of the sixteenth century there was hardly a parish to be found in which the priests did not study magic and alchemy. The practice of exorcism to cast out devils “in imitation of Christ,” who by the way never used exorcism at all, led the clergy to devote themselves openly to “ sacred ” magic in contradistinction to black art, of which latter crime were accused all those who were neither priests nor monks. (p. 58) The kabalists of the latter town were skilled in all the abstruse sciences. They knew the virtues of precious stones and other minerals, and had extracted from alchemy its most profound secrets.

  - Vol. I. p. 60

- And this question of transmutation — this alkahest or universal solvent, which comes next after the elixir vitae in the order of the three alchemical agents? Is the idea so absurd as to be totally unworthy of consideration in this age of chemical discovery? How shall we dispose of the historical anecdotes of men who actually made gold and gave it away, and of those who testify to having seen them do it? Libavius, Geberus, Arnoldus, Thomas Aquinas, Bernardus Comes, Joannes, Penotus, Quercetanus Geber, the Arabian father of European alchemy, Eugenius Philalethes, Baptista Porta, Rubeus, Dornesius, Vogelius, Irenaeus Philaletha Cosmopolita, and many mediaeval alchemists and Hermetic philosophers assert the fact. Must we believe them all visionaries and lunatics, these otherwise great and learned scholars? Francesco Picus, in his work De Auro, gives eighteen instances of gold being produced in his presence by artificial means; and Thomas Vaughan, going to a goldsmith to sell 1,200 marks worth of gold, when the man suspiciously remarked that the gold was too pure to have ever come out of a mine, ran away, leaving the money behind him.

  - Vol. I, The Veil of Isis p. 505.

The Magical Writings Of Thomas Vaughan (Eygenius Philalethes) by A. E Waite, (1888)

(A verbatim reprint of his first four treatises: *Anthrosophia Theomagica, Anima Magica Abscondita, Magia Adamica*, and *The True Ccelum Terras* with...) (full text (https://archive.org/details/A.EWaiteTheMagicalWritingsOfThomasVaughan1888))

- The long confusion of Eugenius Philalethes — otherwise Thomas Vaughan — with the anonymous cosmopolite adept, Eirenaeus Philalethes, who is said to have accomplished the Magnum Opus at the age of twenty-two, and to have subsequently wandered over a large portion of the habitable globe, performing astounding transmutations under various names and disguises, has cast so much doubt upon the history and identity of the Welsh initiate, that it will be best to present the reader with certain verbatim citations from the chief authority concerning him, which is the Athena of Anthony k Wood. Preface

- To the end we might live well, and exercise our charities which was wanting in neither of us, to our power: I employed my self all her life time in the Acquisition of some naturall secrets, to which I had been disposed from my youth up: and what I now write, and know of them

practically, I attained to in her Dayes, not before in very truth, nor after: but during the time wee lived together at the Pinner of Wakefield, and though I brought them not to perfection in those deare Dayes, yet were the Gates opened to mee then, and what I have done since, is but the effect of those principles. I found them not by my owne witt, or labour, but by God's blessing, and the Incouragement I received from a most loving, obedient wife, whom I beseech God to reward in Heaven, for all the Happiness and Content shee afforded mee. I shall lay them down here in their order, protesting earnestly, and with a good Conscience, that they are the very truth, and here I leave them for his use and Benefit, to whom God in his providence shall direct them. xii Biographical Preface

I will not advise you to pleasures, to build houses, and plant vineyards, to enlarge your private possessions, or to multiplie your gold and silver.

- I had in my hand a very long cane, and at last wee came to a churchyard, and it was the Brightest Day-light, that ever I beheld: when wee were about the middle of the churchyard, I struck upon the ground with my cane at the full length, and it gave a most shrill reverberating eccho. I turned back to look upon my wife, and shee appeared to mee in green silk downe to the ground, and much taller, and slenderer then shee was in her life-time, but in her face there was so much glorie, and beautie, that noe Angell in Heaven can have more. xiv
- It was the question of Solomon, and it argued the supremacie of his wisedom, “What was best for man to do all the... dayes of his vanitie under the sun?” If I wish my selfe so wise as to know this great affaire of life, it is because you are fit to manage it. I will not advise you to pleasures, to build houses, and plant vineyards, to enlarge your private possessions, or to multiplie your gold and silver. These are old errors, like Vitriol to the Stone, so many false receipts which Solomon hath tried before you, “And behold all was vanitie, Eccie. u. and vexation of spirit.”
- I have some times seen actions as various as they were great, and my own sullen fate hath forced me to severall courses of life, but I finde not one hitherto which ends not in surfeits or satietie. Let us fansie a man as fortunate as this world can make him; what doth he do but move from bed to board, and provide for the circumstances of those two scenes? To day hee eates and drinkes, then sleeps, that hee may doe the like to morrow.
- Surely, So sir, this is not the Philosophers’ Stone, neither will I undertake to define it, but give me leave to speak to you in the language of Zoroaster: “Seek thou the channel of the Soule.”

See also

- Astrology
- Chemistry
- History of chemistry
- Magic
- Philosopher's stone

- Pseudoscience

Philosophy of science	[Collapse]
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- Association for the Study of Esotericism (http://www.aseweb.org)
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